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178 565 661 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 565 556 [241] [455] For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 565 556 472 [175] [648] Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families, Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *makuännent* and *bäla-seltän*. They [662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 565 369 177 [556] As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 565 554 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The

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178 631 64 565 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta, orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shĭr* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security departments [625] of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 565 656 472 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen. Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, confiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 565 554 [177] [829] Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers, their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa. Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 565 643 662 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-